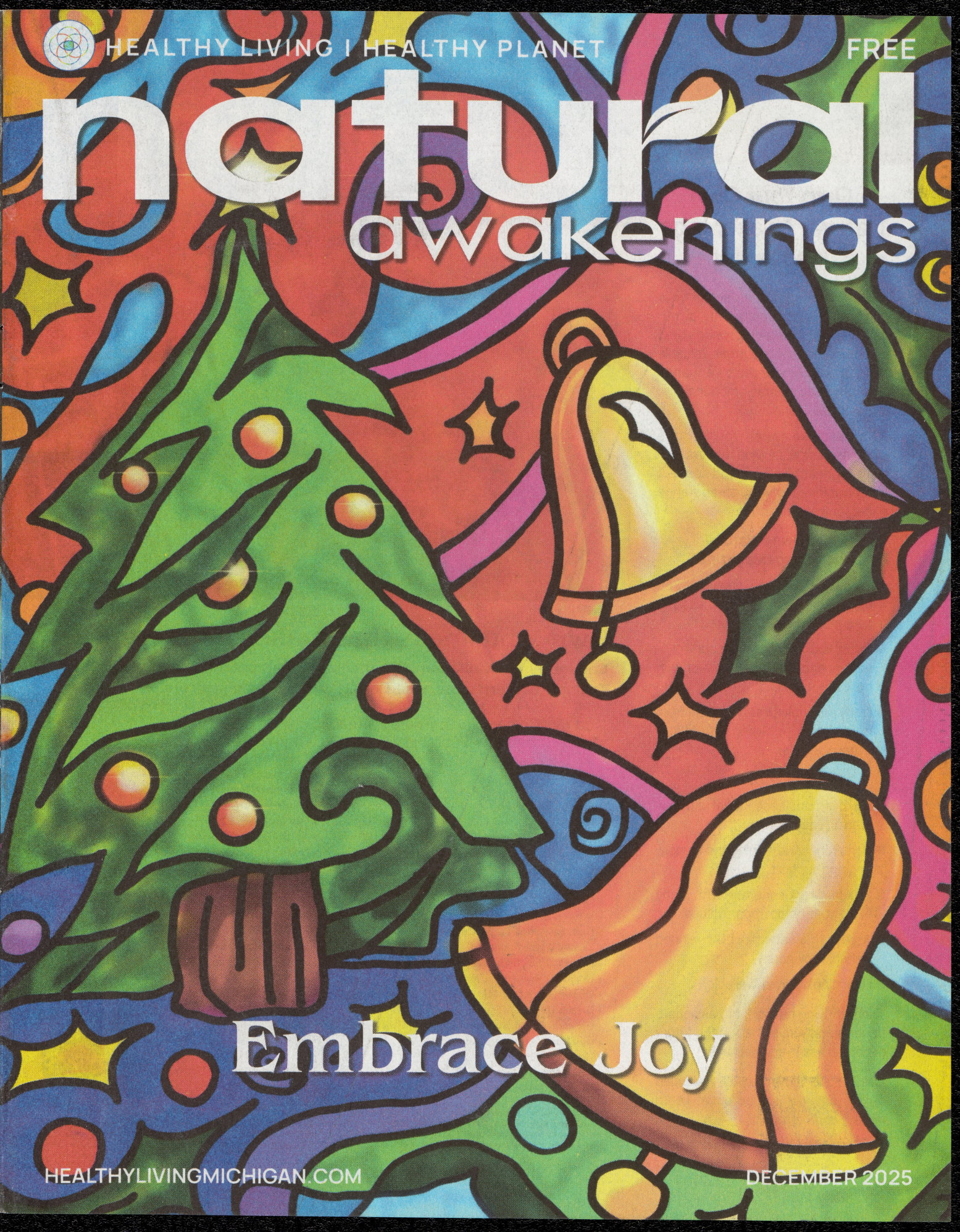
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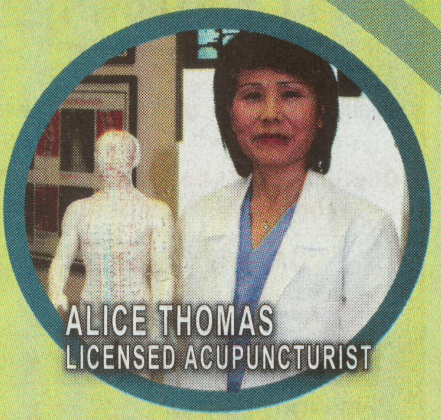

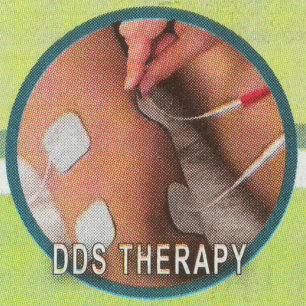

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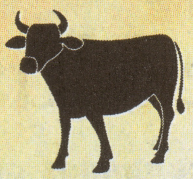

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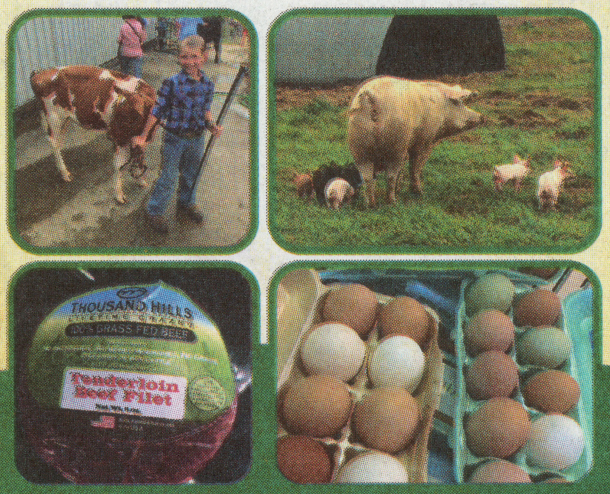

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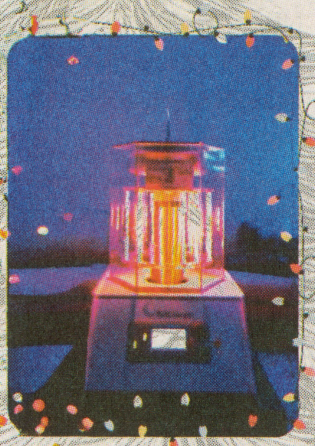

As we transition out of November and into the full holiday season, the extra socializing, rich foods, and added stress can take a toll. In the rush to give to everyone else, we often forget to nourish ourselves.

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Let Your Light Shine

As this year draws to a close, we're reminded that joy isn't something to chase—it's something we cultivate right here, in this very moment. The past has already played its song, and the future's melody has yet to be written. All we truly have—and have ever had—is now.

When we learn to rest in the present, life becomes less about striving and more about being. The moment we stop trying to get somewhere else, we start to notice the beauty in what's right before us—the rhythm of our breath, the dance of light through the trees, the laughter shared over a meal. It's in these small, simple moments that joy quietly reveals itself.

When I was growing up, my mom used to tease me and call me Pollyanna. I was always asking big questions like, "Why can't people just get along?" She'd laugh and say, a bit matter-of-factly, "Oh, you wait, Trina—you'll see when you grow up." And she wasn't wrong. Life can be messy and complicated, and people don't always see eye to eye. But even now, after seeing some of what she meant, I still hold on to that hopeful part of myself—the part that believes we can live with compassion, understanding and light.

Over time, I've come to see that life isn't meant to be a race to the finish line—it's a dance. The music changes, the rhythm shifts and sometimes we miss a step or lose the beat. But even then, when we pause long enough to breathe and find our footing again, we can begin to feel the rhythm return—and with it, a quiet kind of joy. When we allow ourselves to move with that awareness, our hearts open, and even the ordinary moments begin to shine a little brighter.

So this season, may we all take a deep breath, loosen our grip and remember: it's not about the destination—It's about the dance.

With love, presence and joy,

Trina & John

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Holistic Practitioner Offers Acupuncture, Herbal Medicine and Wellness Retreats

Melissa Anderson, LAc

Prescription Earth Acupuncture & Herbal Medicine, in Adrian, offers a deeply personalized approach to holistic wellness. Led by Melissa Anderson, LAc, a board-certified acupuncturist with a master's degree in East-Asian Medicine from Daoist Traditions College of Chinese Medical Arts, the practice serves individuals seeking natural treatment for a range of conditions—from digestive issues and chronic pain to anxiety, fertility concerns and autoimmune conditions.

The clinic provides a variety of services rooted in ancient healing traditions. Acupuncture and acutonics, a tuning-fork therapy ideal for children or those sensitive to needles, offer pathways to physical and emotional balance. Custom herbal formulas are created on-site that are tailored to each patient's diagnosis using an extensive apothecary of Chinese medicinal herbs.

Complementary therapies include gua sha, which stimulates circulation by gently scraping the skin and fire cupping, a suction-based technique that gained widespread attention during the 2016 Olympics. Moxibustion, the burning of mugwort to generate warmth in the body's meridians, adds another layer of therapeutic support.

For those seeking deeper renewal, the practice also conducts Stillness & Soil retreats—three-day nature-immersive experiences that emphasize rest, connection and nourishment. Visit *StillnessAndSoil.com* for more information, a schedule of retreats and to register for any of them.

Location: 1018 N. Main St. For more information or to make an appointment, call 517-618-1772 or visit PrescriptionEarth.com. See ad, opposite page.

Wellness Center Expands to a New, Larger Suite to Better Serve the Community

Miraculous Energies Wellness Center is expanding this season into a new larger suite in Williamston, offering more space for relaxation and access to next-generation wellness technology. The move supports continued growth and reflects a deepening commitment to personalized science-backed services for those seeking natural pathways to balance and vitality.

New to the center is the Epoch Emersion Pod, a full-body capsule that integrates far infrared, terahertz, gyromagnetic and photon energy to support deep cellular rejuvenation. Also available is StemWave, a non-invasive acoustic therapy that stimulates healing for pain relief and tissue repair.

The latest addition is Functional Genomics, a tool for understanding how genes are expressing and influencing health. This personalized approach offers insight into potential imbalances before symptoms occur, guiding nutrition and lifestyle choices tailored to each person's genetic profile.

"These new modalities allow us to create a truly personalized experience for every guest," says Mackenzie, center operations manager. "There's something here for everyone—from relaxation and energy balancing to recovery and rejuvenation."

The center's philosophy emphasizes prevention and long-term well-being. As it grows, it continues to introduce innovative therapies that reflect the community's interest in integrative personalized care.

The expanded space is opening in time for the holiday season, inviting clients to explore emerging technologies and prioritize restoration in a calming science-supported environment.

Location: Williamston. Sessions are available by appointment only. For more information or to make an appointment, call 517-599-4949 or visit MiraculousEnergies.com. See ad, page 7.

Health Center Shares Natural Ways to Support Restful Sleep

Modern living can bring mounting stress that can often result in disrupted sleep patterns. For many, there's a clear link between anxiety, depression and sleep disturbances. Without quality sleep the nervous system cannot properly repair and reset, further fueling emotional imbalance.

Herbal support offers a gentle but effective path to improved rest. Passion flower extract powder—particularly the instant-mix variety from *BulkSupplements.com*—can be blended into a warm evening beverage like tea or cacao milk to calm the mind. Alternating with chamomile tea helps avoid dependency while sustaining benefits. For seasonal mood challenges St. John's wort tincture, used under the guidance of a qualified herbalist, may provide relief from depressive spirals.

Stretching before bed for 15 to 20 minutes helps release muscular tension that can keep the body restless. Gentle floor stretches for the hips, legs and torso paired with mindful breathing are a powerful

nightly ritual. Daily movement—whether with a brisk walk, yard work, swimming or other physical activities—can also boost mood and reset circadian rhythms. Exposure to natural light even for 10 to 20 minutes a day supports nervous system health.

Other sleep-promoting habits include reducing sugar and alcohol intake, maintaining a dark and quiet room and incorporating magnesium and B vitamins into our diets. Whole foods are vital as additives in processed food can disrupt sleep. Regular massage therapy can further relieve chronic tension and elevate overall well-being.

Dexter Natural Health Center offers holistic strategies including these to improve sleep, reduce anxiety and support emotional balance. Location: 3255 Central St., Dexter. For more information or to make an appointment, call 734-769-7794 or visit NaturopathicSchoolOfAnnArbor.net. See ad, page 12.

Holiday Season Prompts Demand for Natural Digestive Support

Creative Lifeflow offers a nurturing path to digestive wellness this holiday season through natural colon hydrotherapy and integrative self-care practices. Located in Ann Arbor, this holistic studio focuses on restoring gut harmony as rich meals, travel and seasonal stress can test the body's internal balance.

During this time of indulgence and disrupted routines, many experience bloating, constipation and sluggish digestion. Creative Lifeflow invites individuals to consider gentle hydrotherapy sessions designed to encourage regularity and comfort. The studio also educates clients on hydration as a foundational habit—encouraging eight glasses of water daily and warm lemon water in the morning to stimulate digestion.

Clients are guided to avoid liquids during meals to preserve digestive enzyme function. Herbal remedies such as peppermint, ginger tea or formulas containing triphala and senna may offer occasional support. The importance of movement is also emphasized; even short walks or gentle yoga sessions can promote intestinal motility and reduce stress.

Creative Lifeflow provides space to reconnect with one's body and digestive rhythm. While holiday events may increase demand, those interested in colon hydrotherapy are encouraged to book sessions around major gatherings to enhance overall wellness. Gift cards are also available, offering a meaningful way to share the benefits of digestive health and self-care with loved ones.

Location: 1817 W. Stadium, Ste. A. For more information or to make an appointment, call 734-674-0922 or visit CreativeLifeflow.com.

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Ayurveda Detox for Multiple Sclerosis Relief

A 2025 observational study in India, published in the *International Journal of Medical and Public Health*, investigated the effectiveness of Ayurveda, specifically Panchakarma therapy, in managing pain and improving the quality of life for patients with multiple sclerosis (MS), a chronic autoimmune neurological disease that inflames and damages nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord. Panchakarma involves cleansing procedures designed to detoxify the body and balance the three *doshas* (energies) in Ayurveda—*vata, pitta* and *kapha*.

Over the span of four years, 120 female MS patients aged 19 to 50 received personalized Panchakarma treatments, including *snehana* (oil therapy), *swedana* (steam therapy), *vamana* (induced vomiting), *virechana* (purgation), *basti* (enema), *nasya* (nasal therapy) and *rasayana* (rejuvenation), alongside yoga and meditation. While 20 percent of the participants showed limited benefits, the remaining 80 percent experienced significant improvements in self-reported pain, mobility and overall well-being, allowing them to reduce their reliance on corticosteroids.

While observational studies lack control groups and cannot establish causal relationships, they can be useful for exploring associations. Further research with larger sample sizes and a control group is needed to confirm these findings.

Ultra-Processed Foods Undermine the Healthiest Diets

Ultra-processing breaks down whole foods into components and recombines them with additives, flavors, colors and emulsifiers, often making them high in calories, salt, sugar and fat. A 2024 study

published in *eClinicalMedicine* examined the consumption of ultra-processed and minimally processed foods among 200,000 adults with various dietary patterns, including regular red meat eaters, low red meat eaters, flexitarians, pescatarians, vegetarians and vegans. Food frequency questionnaires and food diaries were used to determine diet type and ultra-processed food intake.

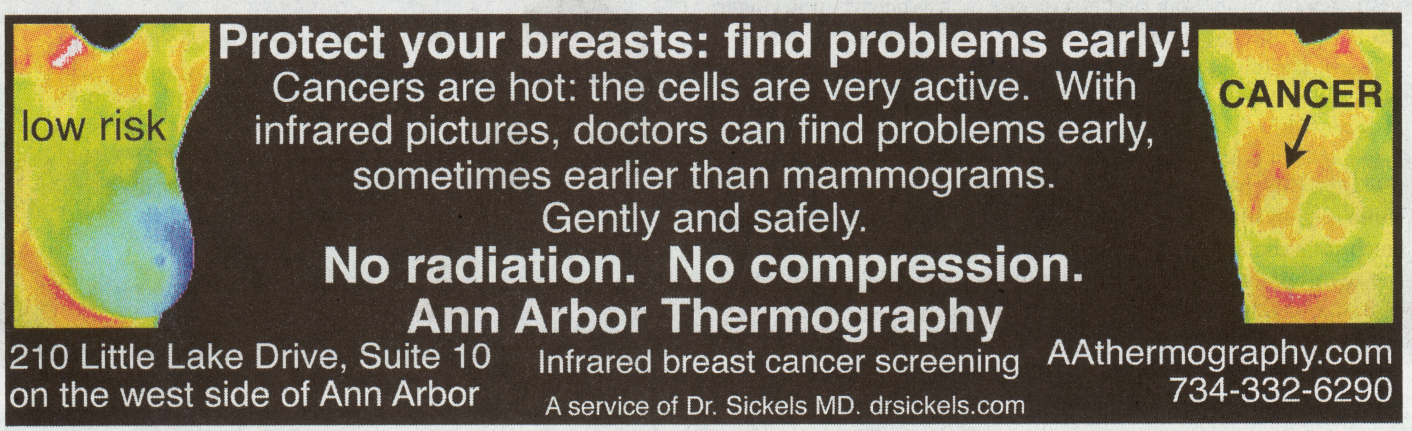
Across all diet types, ultra-processed foods made up roughly one-fifth to one-quarter of total daily food intake. Vegetarians and vegans consumed slightly more ultra-processed foods than regular red meat eaters. Low red meat eaters, flexitarians and pescatarians ate modestly fewer ultra-processed foods than regular red meat eaters. All other groups ate more minimally processed foods than regular red meat eaters.

These findings challenge the assumption that plant-based diets inherently contain fewer processed foods. Vegetarian diets included slightly more ultra-processed foods than meat-heavy diets, while diets with modest amounts of meat or fish had the lowest ultra-processed food levels.

The authors noted that plant-based diets vary in quality depending on the degree of processing. While meat and dairy alternatives are often perceived as sustainable, many are highly processed. Simply replacing meat with packaged plant products may not yield the expected health or environmental benefits.

Understanding How Magic Mushrooms Affect the Brain

Psilocybin, a naturally psychedelic compound found in fungi known as magic mushrooms, distorts space-time perception. A 2024 study



published in *Nature* investigated the brain activity of seven healthy adults before, during and three weeks after taking a high dose of psilocybin and methylphenidate, a stimulant commonly used to treat attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. Participants returned six to 12 months later for another psilocybin dose. Researchers used 18 magnetic resonance images (MRI) to track specific brain changes.

The study revealed that psilocybin significantly disrupted brain connectivity pathways, particularly in regions of the brain linked to self-awareness, time and space, with the most notable changes in the default mode network (DMN). The DMN includes brain regions associated with the sense of self and reality that are active during self-reflection, daydreaming, memory retrieval and mind-wandering.

Psilocybin's disruption of brain activity could explain the profound changes in perception reported by users. Participants with greater brain changes reported more intense experiences. The brain connectivity desynchronization persisted for weeks, potentially explaining the enduring therapeutic benefits in treating conditions like depression.

Kissing Bug Disease Spreads Across 32 States

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has declared Chagas disease endemic to the United States, meaning that it is consistently present in the country. The disease is transmitted to humans and animals, including cats and dogs, through the feces of blood-sucking kissing bugs. After biting its victim, the bug's feces deposit the parasite that causes the disease.

The CDC reports that kissing bugs are native to the Southern U.S., but they have been found in 32 states. Chagas disease, which may initially show no symptoms, is a potentially fatal illness that can lead to chronic conditions such as heart failure, an enlarged heart or an enlarged colon. The CDC's endemic declaration should increase awareness of Chagas disease among doctors and veterinarians, leading to more diagnoses and reporting. The declaration also paves the way for more research investment into improved diagnostics, treatments and prevention.

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Support Your Body's Fight Against Cancer

With These 11 Natural Strategies

A cancer diagnosis is among the most frightening words a person can hear. Yet thousands of people have discovered that the body, when properly supported, has remarkable power to recover. For nearly two decades, researchers at *CancerFighting Strategies.com* have explored safe, natural ways to complement conventional treatments and help the body heal itself. Their findings highlight 11 evidence-inspired, energetically tested strategies that strengthen immunity, improve internal balance, and enhance the effectiveness of therapies such as chemotherapy and radiation.

A Message of Hope

Many people first arrive at this information feeling skeptical or desperate—until they witness change.

Ken C. wrote: *"My mom was given two months to live with stage 4 breast cancer that had spread to her liver and bones. After adding BLA, BLA Enhancer, Zeolite Enhanced, Liver Plus, and OxyDHQ to her routine, her doctor was amazed—'90 to 95% of her cancer is gone.' Her bloodwork normalized, her weight stabilized, and she's gaining strength every week."*

Sherry shared a similar story after her mother, diagnosed with stage 4 colon cancer, added BLA to her care plan.

"After the fifth chemo treatment, her PET scan showed no active cancer and her CEA count dropped from 126 to 2.3. Her doctor called it a miracle."

Stories like these inspire hope—but they also point to deeper biological truths about how cancer forms and how the body can be guided back toward health.

1 Increase Cellular Oxygen

Low oxygen levels in cells can encourage fermentation—an energy process cancer cells depend on. Nobel laureate Dr. Otto Warburg demonstrated that oxygen deprivation underlies many cancers. Strategies that enhance oxygen utilization—such as improving circulation, detoxifying the body, and using oxygen-supporting supplements—can help restore healthy cell function.

2 Balance the Body's pH

Cancer thrives in an acidic environment. A diet rich in alkalizing foods helps restore balance. Supplements like MetOH, with a pH of 11, buffer acidity, and BLA, that prevent cancer cells from releasing lactic acid, fight cancer while helping healthy cells thrive.

3 Supercharge Conventional Therapy

Certain natural compounds, including Narigrav and Zeolite Enhanced, may help chemotherapy work more effectively by targeting cancer cells while protecting healthy tissue. Supporting liver function during treatment also helps the body process toxins, often reducing side effects.

4 Kill Cancer Cells Without Harming Healthy Ones

While radiation and chemotherapy can damage healthy cells, many natural substances—such as BLA, Narigrav and Zeolite Enhanced—selectively attack cancerous tissue. These energetic, botanical and mineral formulations support healthy cells while at the same time they can damage cancer cells.

5 Strengthen the Immune System

Cancer arises when the immune system is not able to kill cancer as fast as it is developing. Unique supplements like Honokare and UltraImmune9 —support the immune system and help it identify and destroy abnormal cells.

6 Address Candida and Fungal Imbalance

Candida overgrowth and fungal infections release toxins like acetaldehyde, depleting oxygen and weakening immunity. Unique Candida killing supplements, such as Alka Super C and Silver GlucoPlus, will also target and attack cancer cells.

7 Detoxify and Reduce Toxin Exposure

Heavy metals, chlorine, and genetically modified foods introduce oxidative stress that can lead to mutations. Drinking purified water, using natural body-care, eating GMO free foods and cleansing the liver, colon, and lymph system with supplements like UltraLiver12 and Zeolite Enhanced can dramatically reduce toxic burden.

8 Neutralize Free Radical Damage

Free radicals—unstable molecules created by pollution, poor diet, and stress—damage DNA and promote tumor growth. A diet rich in antioxidants, combined with supplements such as Health First Grape Seed Extract, Optimal C Elixir and Glutathione Force II helps neutralize these free radicals and protect cellular integrity.

9 Support Enzyme Activity

Low enzyme levels are consistently found in people with cancer. Proteolytic and other protein digesting enzymes, like those found in PapayaPro, when taken on an empty stomach, help digest the protein coating of malignant cells, allowing the immune system to recognize and destroy them.

10 Raise the Body's Vibrational Energy

Every cell has a measurable energetic frequency. Cancer cells vibrate at a much lower frequency. Grounding, meditation, deep breathing, or using Nano Soma Augmented, The Master Healing Elixir or Oxy Life Force Elixir can raise cellular vibrations, fighting cancer while supporting vitality and balance.

11 Release Emotional Stress

Long-term stress suppresses immunity and depletes healing energy. Dr. Ryke Geerd Hamer's research connected emotional shock to cancer onset, showing how unresolved trauma can manifest physically. Mind-body therapies, counseling, and mindfulness help release emotional blockages and re-activate the body's innate healing intelligence.

Rethinking the "Cancer Diet"

While limiting sugar seems logical, extreme low-carb or ketogenic diets can backfire by elevating stress hormones like cortisol, suppressing immunity, and increasing inflammation. The researchers at Cancer Fighting Strategies recommend a balanced approach—one that provides steady energy without feeding cancer cells. Their testing highlights a slow-release non-GMO starch that sustains glucose levels without triggering insulin spikes, helping the body maintain strength during recovery.

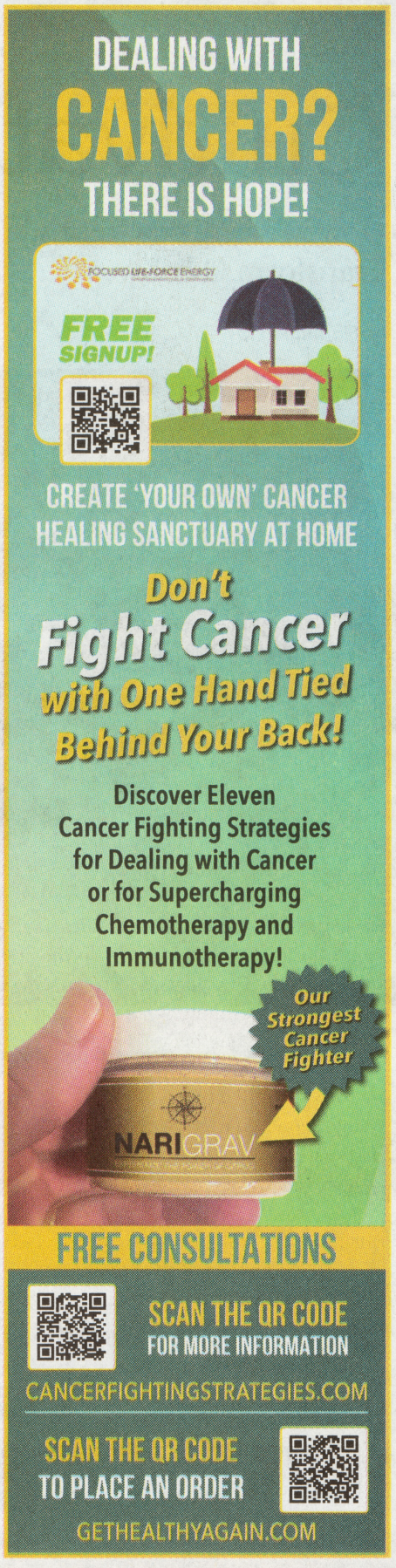
Combining Nature and Medicine

Chemotherapy and radiation can save lives—but they also deplete the body's natural resilience. Integrating targeted nutritional supplements, detoxification, and energetic support helps patients tolerate treatment better and often improves outcomes. As one practitioner summarized, "Supporting the body is not an alternative—it's essential."

CancerFightingStrategies.com continues to research and energetically test new natural therapies. Their mission remains clear: to empower individuals with safe, effective ways to complement their medical care and restore hope where it's needed most.

For more information visit CancerFighting Strategies.com. To place an order, visit Get HealthyAgain.com. See ad, this page.

Disclaimer: *These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. The products and information contained herein are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any diseases or medical problems. It is not intended to replace your doctor's recommendations. The information is provided for educational purposes only. Nutritional benefits may vary from one person to another.*



Cultivating Joy

How Movement, Gratitude and Connection Transform Our Lives

by Hannah Tytus

"Discovering more joy does not, I'm sorry to say, save us from the inevitability of hardship and heartbreak. In fact, we may cry more easily, but we will laugh more easily, too. Perhaps we are just more alive," reflected the late Archbishop Desmond Tutu in *The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World*, where he shared wisdom alongside the Dalai Lama.

Joy invites us to be more alive. It surfaces through awareness, connection and acceptance of the present moment, exactly as it is. As winter days grow shorter and the year draws to a close, this is a wonderful time to explore what joy truly is, the things that block it and how it can be reclaimed. Ultimately, joy is not a reward for a perfect life, but a way of being that reminds us to embody our full humanity. Though sometimes fleeting, joy can be profoundly sustaining.

A Physical Experience

"Joy is much bigger than happiness," asserted Tutu. "While happiness is often seen as being dependent on external circumstances, joy is not." This mindset—rooted in both heart and spirit—aligns closely with the Dalai Lama's vision that genuine fulfillment comes from recognizing the deep interconnectedness of all living beings. Joy is

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an embodied emotion that is distinct from happiness. Happiness is stable, evaluative and may reflect broader life satisfaction—a contentment with one's career, finances, family, romantic relationships or personal fulfillment—while joy is experienced in the present moment. It is intense, yet fleeting.

In a study conducted in 2025 and published in the *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-Being*, researchers interviewed 14 adults about their experiences of joy. The findings explain joy as a complex emotion shaped by individual, relational and cultural contexts. According to the research, joy is intense, transcendent and deeply felt—often arising spontaneously in response to meaningful experiences or connections.

In contrast, happiness encompasses a broader spectrum, exhibiting greater stability, and is associated with life satisfaction and contentment. Participants described joy as a somatic experience, identifying sensations such as "a rush of warmth and lightness throughout the body," "electricity," "a bubbling up," and "tingling sensations," accompanied by "the urge to move, smile and embrace others." These visceral reactions often accompanied moments of intense connection, awe and accomplishment.

If joy is felt through the body, movement itself becomes a doorway to experience it more fully. This cultivation of joy is the cornerstone of Jennifer Joy Jiménez's life's work. A pioneer in integrative movement and founder of the Brave Thinking Institute's Health & Well-Being Division, she developed TranscenDANCE, a conscious dance modality for all ages and mobility levels designed to improve mental, emotional and physical health through inspiring music, body positivity and free-form movement.

Conscious dance is any form of movement that emphasizes mindfulness, inner exploration and emotional release rather than performance or choreography. Although these transformative movement practices have existed for thousands of years, Jiménez laments that for many Americans, dance may be confined to weddings, occasional outings or fitness classes, leaving little room for the expressive and emotive daily practice that "allows our soul-self to move our human self."

Jiménez asserts, "Just a few minutes of dancing releases the happy hormones, offering a DOSE [dopamine, oxytocin, serotonin and endorphins] that shifts our mood better than any antidepressant." Scientific evidence supports this assertion. A 2024 meta-analysis published in *The BMJ* analyzed 218 clinical trials, demonstrating that dance was more effective in alleviating depression symptoms than walking, yoga, strength training and even traditional antidepressants.

The Social Nexus

Joy thrives on connection. While it can arise in solitude, it naturally expands most effectively through relationships and shared humanity. When individuals feel seen, supported and part of something larger than themselves, their sense of well-being deepens.

The 2024 *World Happiness Report* identifies social support as one of the strongest predictors of life satisfaction. Similarly, the *Harvard Study of Adult Development*—one of the longest-running longitudinal studies of human health—has shown that healthy, fulfilling relationships are the single greatest predictors of both longevity and life satisfaction.

This growing body of research underscores that social connection shapes health across our lifespan. Individuals that maintain meaningful relationships exhibit lower risks of cardiovascular disease, hypertension, diabetes, infections, cognitive decline and depression compared to those that are lonely. When

people share laughter, empathy or a sense of belonging, they exhibit improvements to their nervous system and immune function, as well as an expanded capacity to experience joy.

Isolation's Impact

While connection nurtures joy, disconnection erodes it. In *The Book of Joy*, the Dalai Lama identified loneliness as one of the most significant obstacles to joy, emphasizing that it arises not from isolation itself, but from a mindset of separation. A person can live alone in the wilderness and still feel content, while another may feel lonely in a crowded room. Loneliness, he suggests, emerges when the heart closes—when anger, fear or stress obscure the ability to perceive warmth in others.

Many modern experiences reinforce this sense of separation. Chronic stress, fatigue, poverty and depression all constrict the emotional space needed for joy. Cultural ideals built around constant happiness add another layer of strain. Researchers describe how placing pressure on ourselves to be perpetually positive leads us to suppress authentic emotion, rather than cultivate genuine contentment. The Dalai Lama observed that persistent anxiety keeps the mind spinning in worry, unable to rest in presence.

Emotional avoidance further narrows the capacity for joy. According to the 2024 *World Happiness Report*, individuals that intentionally process difficult experiences report a 40 percent increase in life satisfaction. Gratitude research suggests the reason behind this phenomenon: Recognizing joy requires openness and receptivity. When individuals soften their defenses and allow life's full range of emotion, they create space for joy to return.

Cultivating Gratitude

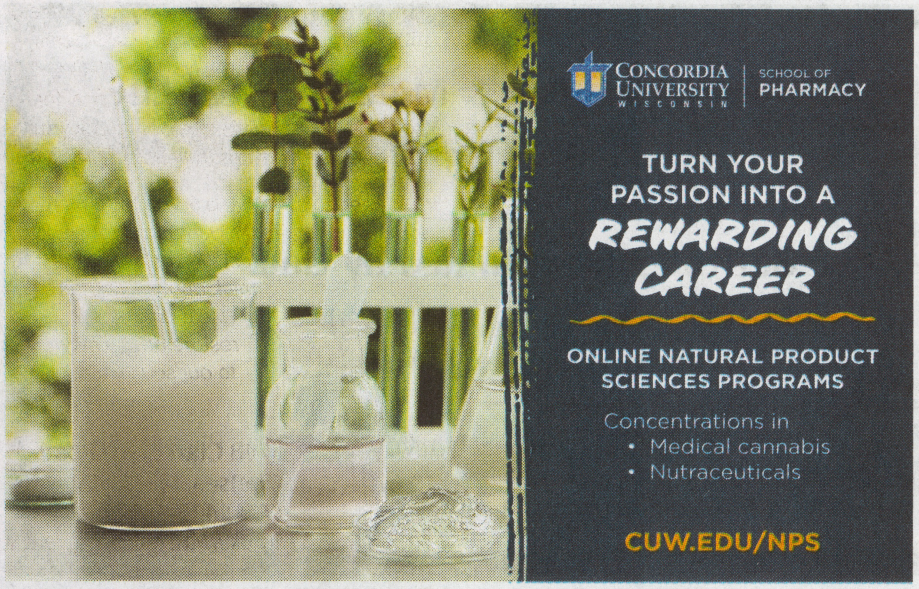
Adopting an attitude of gratitude is one of the best ways to cultivate joy. Recognized by the Dalai Lama as one of the "8 Pillars of Joy", gratitude has been shown to enhance the capacity to perceive joy in everyday life. Gratitude increases joy, and joy, in turn, increases gratitude in an upward spiral of positive disposition. A 2018 study published in *The Journal of Positive Psychology* revealed that when the participants practiced gratitude regularly, it became part of their natural disposition. Participants that exhibited greater gratitude also experienced heightened levels of joy.

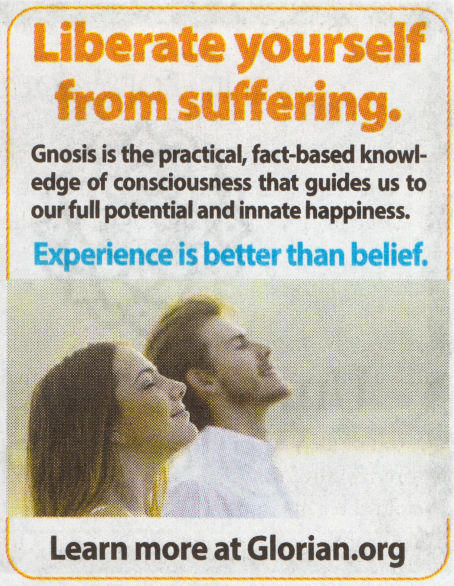
Jiménez notes that cultivating gratitude—and therefore joy—is not just a matter of responding to positive circumstances. "There is a difference between gratitude for and gratitude in. It's easy to be grateful for positive windfalls like winning the lottery or receiving a nice gift. But when something challenging happens, such as a loved one receiving a serious medical diagnosis, how can we be grateful in that moment for the gift that lies in the wisdom of that situation?" Viewing challenging events as lessons with the potential for wisdom and healing helps us cultivate a more resilient kind of gratitude.

As Tutu and the Dalai Lama teach, joy is not the absence of struggle but the presence of heart. It lives in the body, grows through connection and deepens through gratitude. To reclaim it, we must soften the grip of perfection, release the myth of constant happiness and allow space for both laughter and tears.

Jiménez reminds us that joy is something to be practiced—not achieved—through movement, mindfulness and a willingness to feel. Gratitude becomes the bridge that turns awareness into aliveness, inviting us to notice what was there all along. When people pause long enough to be present, they discover that joy does not need to be sought. It simply needs to be welcomed.

Hannah Tytus is an integrative health coach, researcher and content creator for KnoWEwell, P.B.C., as well as a former writer at the National Institutes of Health.





Winter's Duality

Embracing Joy and Melancholy

by Marlaina Donato

December can be a bittersweet paradox of festive celebrations and short, gloomy days filled with contrasting emotions. As the old year fades into the golden spark of a new beginning, we may find ourselves entangled in the beautiful complexity of being human. The twelfth month challenges us to accept the dichotomy of jubilation and melancholy, eagerness and regret. By acknowledging and making room for the harder emotions, we can fully embrace joy.

Just as the bare trees of the north stand boldly against the sky, December urges us to dive into self-honesty to discover the eternal flame deep within us, untouched by the world's chaos. Celebrating the holy days of winter can be an internal, sacred journey.

Kindling the flames of empathy and goodwill is a form of self-care that ignites positive change for ourselves and others. Embodying our light can be as simple as pausing before reacting in anger or allowing others to hold their own opinions, even when they differ from ours. Feeling more alive in our merriness often happens effortlessly when we choose to live and let live.

As winter arrives and sweet aromas fill the kitchen, December allows us to embrace all that is beautiful and nourishing. Should a ghost of wistfulness haunt a moment of glee, we can choose to embrace what is possible in the present moment between the past and the future. This month, be inspired to:

- Release the need to control outcomes and welcome spontaneity and flow.
- Embody joy without guilt, even when the world seems in turmoil.
- Allow feelings of grief while cherishing fond memories of lost loved ones.
- Invest in what brings lasting joy and meaning.

Marlaina Donato is an author, painter and composer. Connect at WildflowersAndWoodSmoke.com.

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Katie Kritikos

on Secrets to a Joyful and Authentic Life

by Sandra Yeyati

Katie Kritikos is a lawyer, lecturer and devoted mother of a 3-year-old boy. She graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with a juris doctor and a master's degree in library and information sciences. Upon graduation two decades ago, she opened a solo practice in rural Illinois, offering legal services in estate planning and real estate transactions. After three years, she shifted to working for the Illinois Attorney General in Chicago as a tax litigator.

Since 2018, Kritikos has been teaching information policy classes at the University of Illinois School of Information Sciences. In 2019, she launched her blog, Joyful Living With Katie Kritikos (*KatieKritikos.com*), sharing her passion for writing and insights on family and wellness with a wider audience. Since becoming a parent to a child with autism spectrum disorder and hearing loss, her interests now include disability advocacy and learning American Sign Language.

What is your definition of authenticity?

Authenticity means realizing I don't have to follow other people's paths. I can find what works for me and be true to myself. It's a journey of self-discovery. At 40, authenticity means accepting myself as I am. I used to not like the way I looked, wishing I was taller or thinner. Many women go through this turmoil with their self-image. Now I like my body the way it is. Authenticity is about acceptance.

How do you define joyful living?

Discovering your authentic self is a path to finding your joy, which is deeply personal. Joy is that calm, warm, content feeling inside, whether it's for a moment or longer lasting. Media often portrays

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joy, especially during the holidays, with pictures of happy families surrounded by Christmas toys, but your family gathering may not look like that.

Joy is empowering because it doesn't have to match what everyone else is doing for fun or happiness. Joy is a lifestyle and a choice. It's about finding what works for you and then incorporating those things into your daily rituals. Focus on small, real-life actions and choices that resonate with you, not influencers or celebrities, to find your authentic self and more joy.

What do you mean by embracing the joy of missing out?

FOMO—the fear of missing out—is most evident when you're scrolling through Instagram, seeing others having fun and doing cool things, but those images are unrealistic and unsustainable. I prefer the joy of missing out, allowing me to focus on my life and celebrate what I get to do, instead of comparing my life to others.

This approach nurtures my authentic self and also lets me try new experiences without expectations. If I visit the farmers market, do I have to post about it? Can I simply enjoy that experience? Do I need to get the likes and affirmations of other people to validate my experiences? I find it troubling if we're living just to show off for others.

How do you recover from an emotional slump?

Last year, my husband, George, unexpectedly lost his job, prompting us to move from Illinois to Vermont for a new position. We also learned that our son, Teddy, who is deaf in one ear, needs a cochlear implant and is on the autism spectrum. These changes left me feeling depressed about leaving our old home, shocked by my husband's job loss and worried about my son. I had to decide how to handle these unexpected challenges and who I would become.

The answer is to stay positive and be kind to yourself. It took time to realize my feelings are valid. Feeling angry, tired or overwhelmed is okay. Constantly being happy, agreeable or obedient may stem from social expectations, but it's important to acknowledge bad days without letting them spiral into depression.

Finding a support network, being honest about your feelings and asking for help are crucial. It takes strength to admit you don't feel good, because we often feel pressured to be perfect. Communicating with my partner, parents and friends, checking in and seeking help are good ways to overcome feelings of being overwhelmed or low.

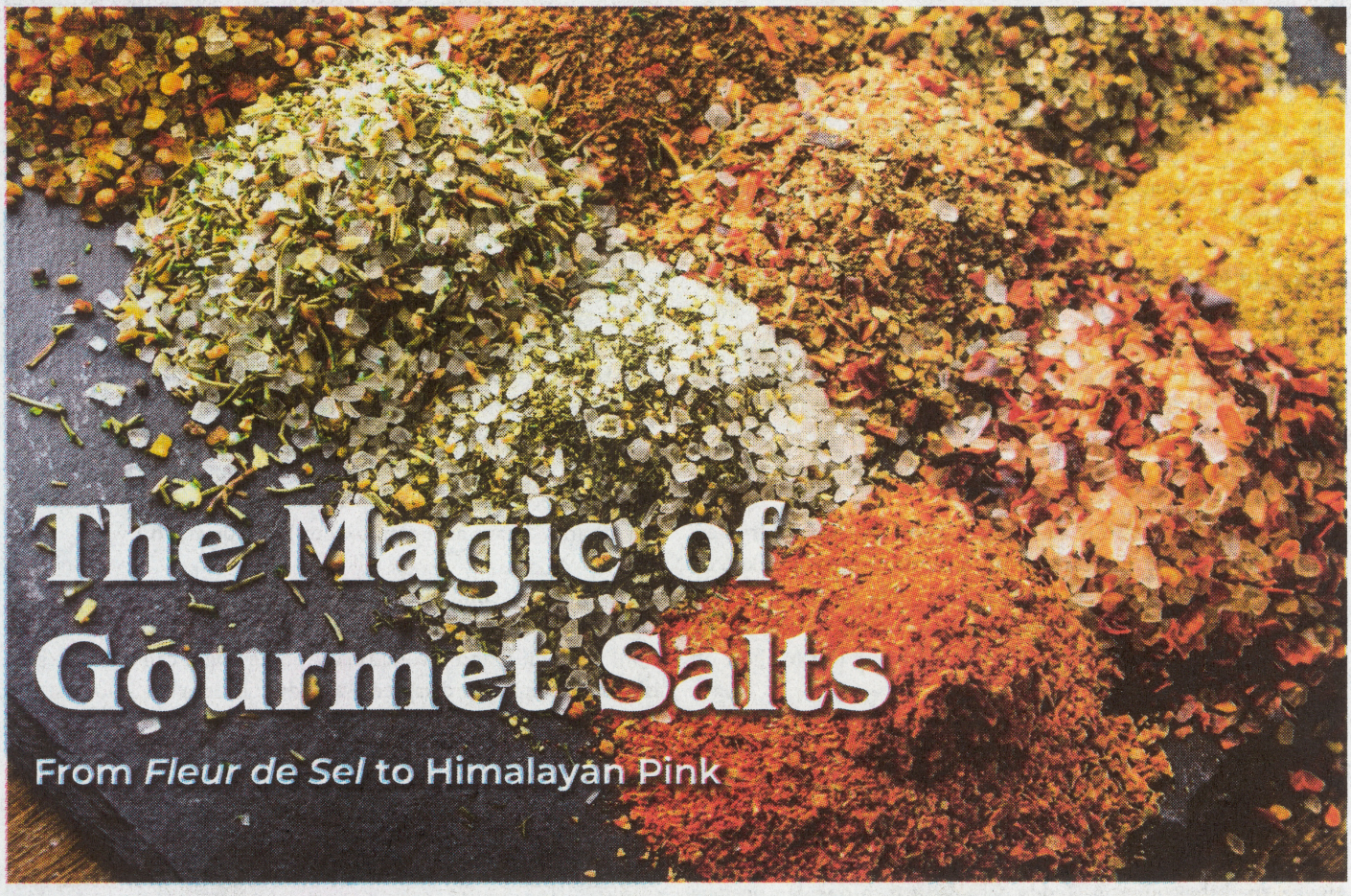
Do you have hope?

Yes, I do. I love my child and my neighbor, and when I interact with others, I strive to make it positive. It makes me feel good, and maybe it makes them feel good, too. That's where hope starts for me: continuing to smile, holding the door, checking in on someone, following up with those struggling, and lending a hand. That's all I can do, but I can do it, so I will.

I don't want my child to grow up and think there's no hope. Focusing on joy during tough times might seem foolish or selfish, but I think it's radical and revolutionary. Some might call self-care selfish, but I completely disagree. As Audre Lorde, a black activist and feminist librarian, said, "Caring for myself is not self-indulgence. It is self-preservation."

We deserve to take care of ourselves. By channeling our joy and being our authentic selves, we can inspire others. We need each other now more than ever, so we need to be our best selves. Self-care isn't selfish; it's essential for continuing the fight and spreading hope and joy.

Sandra Yeyati is the national editor of Natural Awakenings.



The Magic of Gourmet Salts

From *Fleur de Sel* to Himalayan Pink

by Maya Whitman

Specialty salts can transform everyday foods. To elevate the experience, add bold chili salt to a hearty winter stew, smoked salt to popcorn or ruby-colored wine salt to chocolate truffles. Flavored finishing salts surprise the tastebuds in ordinary dishes like oatmeal, desserts or hot cocoa. Used mindfully, gourmet salt reduces the need for excessive sodium and invites us to savor the extraordinary.

"I think salt is amazing and brings out the best in food—all those hidden flavors," says Craig Cormack, a gourmet salt chef in Cape Town, South Africa. His career as a food artisan advanced in 2009 when he embraced specialty salts. "My personal collection is sitting at 232 naturally occurring salts from around the world," adds Cormack, who favors unrefined regional varieties, but also enjoys bold options such as smoked Danish Viking salt for its ancient, bonfire-infused qualities.

Salts vary in texture, flavor and nuance based on their source and harvesting techniques, such as solar evaporation or hand-raking. Many contain trace minerals, adding depth to dishes, and when consumed in moderation, sea salt may benefit the body compared to refined salt.

Salt's Good Side. Salt has a bad reputation for causing high blood pressure and other health conditions, but the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) states that more than 70 percent of dietary sodium comes from prepared and packaged foods, not from salt added at home. The FDA daily value for sodium is less than 2,300 milligrams per day, and using unrefined salts can be a healthier alternative to common table salt, which is demineralized and processed with anti-clumping agents. Celtic gray salt and other mineral-rich varieties contain naturally occurring, trace heavy metals, but also minerals like potassium, magnesium and calcium, which can help prevent the body from absorbing harmful metals like lead.

"We all need salt in moderation to live. The best way to ingest salt is to season your own food. Processed food has too much salt, and you can't control your intake. Naturally made, mineral-rich salt is the best choice," affirms Nancy Bruns, a seventh-generation salt maker at J.Q. Dickinson Salt-Works, in Malden, West Virginia. She and her family produce rare, small-batch finishing salts harvested from the ancient Iapetus Ocean beneath the Appalachian Mountains.

Spanning the Salt Spectrum. Whether sourced from evaporated seawater (sea salt) or underground salt mines (rock salt), there is much to choose from. Sea salt comes in various colors, coarseness and complex flavors. Highly prized flake salt—*fleur de sel* from coastal France—is hand-harvested from evaporation ponds with clay bottoms and, with its delicate, paper-thin crystals, offers delicious nuances as a finishing salt. Celtic gray salt, sourced deeper within evaporation ponds, contains more moisture and minerals.

Himalayan pink salt, mined from salt beds formed from ancient seas approximately 600 million years ago, contains more than 80 minerals and has a rosy color due to the presence of iron oxide and magnesium. Black volcanic rock salt, also known as Himalayan black salt or *kala namak*, has a pungent, sulfuric quality that diminishes

with heat during cooking and imparts an egg-like aroma and taste that can be useful in vegan recipes. The large, coarse grains of kosher salt traditionally used in Hebrew cuisine give food a robust, briny quality and satisfying texture.

Salt can be infused with herbs, spices, fruits and smoke from various woods to create a multitude of flavor qualities and moods. Bruns highlights her ramp-infused salt, which is combined with wild onions gathered during the Appalachian springtime. Charred oak from old bourbon barrels makes their smoked salt a favorite for grills and even chocolate desserts. Cormack spotlights the fine indulgence of Tartuflanghe brand truffle salt from Italy for an unforgettable mushroom risotto.

Bruns is grateful for the timeless spirit of salt. "I come to work on the same land where my ancestors made salt for over 150 years. I feel their presence, as if they are watching over my shoulder. That legacy and sense of stewardship is present every time I sprinkle salt on my food."

Maya Whitman is a frequent writer for Natural Awakenings.

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FLAVOR-INFUSED SALT

1 tsp dried herbs, spices or citrus zest of choice
¼ cup kosher salt, coarse sea salt or coarse Himalayan pink salt

Basic Infusion Instructions

In a bowl, combine 1 teaspoon of dried herbs, spices or citrus zest for every ¼ cup of kosher salt, coarse sea salt or coarse Himalayan pink salt. Stir thoroughly and store the mixture in a sealed, dry, airtight jar. For optimal results, let the flavored salt sit in the closed jar for a few hours before use.

Suggested Combinations and Uses

Create a delicious finishing salt for grilled shrimp, vegan tacos or black bean soup by combining 1 teaspoon fresh lime zest, ½ of a dried hot chili pepper and ¼ cup kosher salt. Sprinkle to taste just before serving.

Enhance fresh blueberries, melon, warm oatmeal or freshly baked brownies with a unique flavor by crushing 1 teaspoon of organic lavender buds in a mortar and pestle until the flowers are bruised and fragrant, then combining them with ¼ cup coarse Himalayan pink salt. Sprinkle to taste immediately before serving.

Make a wonderful cooking salt for roasted vegetables by mixing 1 teaspoon dried rosemary with ¼ cup Celtic gray sea salt. Sprinkle to taste before baking in the oven.

Recipe courtesy of Marlaina Donato.

HEARTY VEGETABLE FRITTATA

YIELD: 4 SERVINGS

2 Tbsp olive oil, divided
1 large yellow onion, sliced
1 medium zucchini, thinly sliced
1 medium yellow squash, thinly sliced
1 medium red bell pepper, thinly sliced
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 tsp fresh thyme leaves
¼ tsp heirloom salt, divided
4 large eggs
½ cup whole milk
5 grinds from black pepper mill
3 dashes of jalapeño hot sauce
⅓ cup feta cheese, crumbled

Preheat the oven to 350° F.

Heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil in a 10-inch oven-proof skillet over medium heat. Add sliced onions and sauté until lightly browned, about 8 to 10 minutes, stirring frequently.

Take the onions out of the pan and set them aside. Add the remaining tablespoon of olive oil to the pan, along with the zucchini, yellow squash and red bell pepper. Sauté for 5 to 7 minutes until cooked through and tender. Add the garlic, thyme leaves and ⅛ teaspoon of salt. Stir and cook for 30 seconds more until fragrant.

Remove the pan from the heat. Return the onions to the pan and mix well. Let it cool for 10 minutes.

In a small bowl, whisk together the eggs, milk, remaining salt, pepper and hot sauce. Pour this mixture over the vegetables and sprinkle feta cheese on top.

Place the pan on the center rack of the oven and bake for 20 to 25 minutes, or until just set in the center.

Take the pan out of the oven and let it sit for 5 minutes. Cut into quarters and serve.

Recipe courtesy of J.Q. Dickinson Salt-Works.

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FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5

VegMichigan at Kindlefest – 5-10pm. Visit our table at this festive holiday event. We will be handing out delicious food samples and offering our free 30-Day Plant-Based Pledge to attendees. Ann Arbor Farmers Market, 315 Detroit St, Ann Arbor. VegMichigan.org.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6

Dexter Winter Farmers Market – 9am-1pm. Features art and crafts, bread and baked goods, jewelry, fresh produce, eggs, cheese, meats and more. Huron River Methodist Church, 7643 Huron River Dr, Dexter. DexterMarket.com.

Invasive Species Removal – 10am-1pm. Help remove invasive shrubs in the natural areas to restore this beautiful woodland habitat. Trinity Health Ann Arbor, 5251 McAuley Dr, Ypsilanti. Register: hrwc.org.

Natural Health Open House – 12-1pm. Stop by for refreshments, meet us, get some information about what we offer. Bodywork, herbal medicine, classes, naturopathy. Free. Dexter Natural Health Center, 3255 Central St, Dexter. 734-769-7794. NaturopathicSchoolOfAnnArbor.net.

Create Your Own Yule Ball – 1-3pm. With Jennie Reinert. $15, including materials. Coyote Wisdom, 2338 N Grand River, Lansing. CoyoteWisdomStore.com.

Christmas at The Farmhouse – 3pm. An afternoon of Romanian Music, as we welcome back, for their fifth performance, the American Romanian Festival String Quartet. $30. Historic Oddfellows Hall, 6121 Merriman Rd, Garden City. StraightFarmhouse.org.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7

Wonder Walk: Flavors of Celebration – 1-2pm. Explore foods that tell stories of cultural connections and celebrations old and new. Free. Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N Dixboro Rd, Ann Arbor. mbgna.umich.edu.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9

Turn That Patch into a Plan Workshop – 6-7pm. Designing with native plants isn't just about what you grow, it's about how you shape your space. In this hands-on workshop, Zoe Evans (Plan it Wild) and Heather Evans (Design Your Wild) guide you through the process of creating a cohesive yard plan that supports both your lifestyle and biodiversity. Free. Zoom. AnnArbor.WildOnes.org.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10

Let's Eat! – 6-7:30pm. Explore 4 tasting stations featuring recipes created especially for this event, each celebrating the global stories of food, culture, and the plants that nourish us. Free. Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N Dixboro Rd, Ann Arbor. mbgna.umich.edu.

Ann Arbor Area Wild Ones Chapter Meeting – 6:30-7:30pm. Chapter Successes in 2025. Join us over Zoom for a pictorial review of the gardens we visited, the things we learned and the people we learned from. Free. AnnArbor.WildOnes.org.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6

Holiday Market – 10am-4pm. Experience warmth, wonder, and community while shopping hand-created gifts and special treats from local artisans. Meet our healing practitioners, and explore interactive offerings that nurture body, mind, and spirit. Enjoy a creativity station and joyful scavenger hunt with prizes! Free. Angel Whispers Healing Center, 3045 Baker Rd, Dexter. 734-808-2222. AngelWhispers.org.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12

Yoga with Reiki Lithotherapy for Insomnia/Restful Sleep Workshop – 1-2:30pm. Experience the profoundly synergistic healing benefits of pairing Yoga with Reiki Lithotherapy (the use of purpose specific crystals within the body's energy field). Offered by Crysterra Wellness. $40. Verapose Yoga House, 3173 Baker Rd, Dexter. Registration required: CrysterraWellness.com.

Restorative Yoga with Reiki-Lithotherapy Workshop – 7-8:30pm. Enjoy this gentle, calming yoga practice paired with the healing and regenerative benefits of reiki-lithotherapy. With appropriate crystals placed on the body as well as a mini-reiki/lithotherapy session from the instructor at the end of each class. All levels. $30/$35. Crysterra Wellness at Bates Elementary School, Bates Gym, 2704 Baker Rd, Dexter. CrysterraWellness.com.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13

Elmwood Cemetery Bird and History Walk – 9-11am. Explore the birds, unique landmarks and history of this beautiful 86-acre cemetery. Elmwood Cemetery, 1200 Elmwood St, Detroit. Register: DetroitBirdAlliance.org.

Annual Holiday Greens Workshop – 1-3pm. Hosted by the Ann Arbor Garden Club. Create your own holiday wreath, mantelpiece or table decoration. $20. Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N Dixboro Rd, Ann Arbor. mbgna.umich.edu.

Wine in the Woods – 7-9pm. Bring your favorite beverage and enjoy a guided walk through the woods with a naturalist. After the walk, "unwine" by the campfire and enjoy gourmet smores. Harris Nature Center, 3998 Van Atta Rd, Okemos. 517-349-3866. Registration required: Tinyurl.com/5ehpwhxu.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14

In Dulce Jubilo: Holiday Band Concert – 2:30-3:30pm. Celebrate the joy of the season with the Forest Hills Adult Community Band's free holiday concert. Come early for a pre-concert talk with director John Martin at 2:15pm. Forest Hills Eastern High School Auditorium, 2200 Pettis Ave NE, (Use Knapp parking and entrance), Ada. Facebook.com/share/14KaSPBoego.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17

Wonder Walk: Flavors of Celebration – 5:30-6:30pm. Explore foods that tell stories of cultural connections and celebrations old and new. Free. Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N Dixboro Rd, Ann Arbor. mbgna.umich.edu.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20

Winter Solstice Birding – 8-10am. All levels of birders welcome. Led by Kelsey Dehring. West Lake, Dexter Township. Register: Washtenaw.org.

Dexter Winter Farmers Market – 9am-1pm. Features art and crafts, bread and baked goods, jewelry, fresh produce, eggs, cheese, meats and more. Huron River Methodist Church, 7643 Huron River Dr, Dexter. DexterMarket.com.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21

Pet Loss Support Group – 1-2:30pm. With Cōlleen O'Brien. Features guided discussions, remembrance rituals and opportunities for reflection and connection. In-person or Zoom. Free; donations appreciated. HSHV's Conference Room, 3100 Cherry Hill Rd, Ann Arbor. 734-661-3575. hshv.org/petloss.

Ongoing Events

DAILY

Free Online Programs – Practical Buddhism, Healing and Compassion Meditation, Group Practice, White Tara Guided Healing Meditation, Sunday Talks. Jewel Heart Tibetan Buddhist Learning Center: JewelHeart.org.

Herbs for the Southeast Michigan Garden – Learn how to grow and use 20 culinary and medicinal herbs suited for the southeast Michigan garden. Will cover preservation techniques, basic medicine making and crafting herbal oils, poultices, infused honeys and vinegars plus more. Free. More info & register: CastleRemedies.podia.com.

Introduction to Homeopathy Class – Learn how to choose remedies and how to use them. Class contains nearly 4 hrs of pre-recorded videos. Downloadable resources. $75. More info & register: CastleRemedies.podia.com.

New Client Special: Alice Huang's Chinese Natural Therapies – Allows customers $10 off acupuncture and massage at any location. AliceHuangs.com/coupons.

Tiny Lions Lounge & Adoption Center (TLC) – 12-7pm, Wed-Sun. Offers feline-friendly activities with kittens and cats available to take home. 5245 Jackson Rd, Ste A1, 734-661-3575. TinyLions.org.

Naturally Purifying and Supercharging Your Body Podcast – 7-7:45pm. Matthew Hazen is the owner of Human Consciousness Support, a company that produces a unique nutraceutical product called MasterPeace. Free. BuzzSprout.com/1206776/14236700.

MONTHLY

River Walk Trash Cleanup – 11am-12pm. 1st day of each month. Join us in caring for the Earth and her waterways by picking up the trash on the Lansing River Trail and the areas around our building. Will meet each month unless it is actively raining or there is snow on the ground. Weavers of the Web, ATC, 809 Center St, Ste 8A, Lansing. 517-657-5800. WeaversOfTheWeb.org.

WEEKLY

Afterschool Leadership Program – Runs Sept-May. Guiding 300+ middle and high schoolers through a culinary journey. It provides weekly culturally relevant, accessible and empowering culinary education to youth at schools and community sites. More info: DetroitFoodAcademy.org.

Jewel Heart Ann Arbor Programs – Includes courses, weekly meditation and social activities. Jewel Heart Tibetan Buddhist Learning Center, 1129 Oak Valley Dr, Ann Arbor. 734-994-3387. JewelHeart.org.

Jewel Heart Bloomfield Hills Programs – Includes courses, weekly meditation and social activities. Theosophical Society, 27745 Woodward Ave, Berkley. 734-239-5985. JewelHeart.org.

Yoga with Crysterra Wellness – Variety of classes Tues-Thurs. Cost varies. For schedule & details: CrysterraWellness.com.

SUNDAYS

Livestream Sunday Service – 9:55am. Unity of Livonia, 28660 Five Mile Rd, Livonia. UnityOfLivonia.org.

Hudson Valley Humane Society Rescue Reading – 10am-12pm. Includes humane education lessons, group read-aloud and dog meet-and-greet. Drop-off event. $10; space limited. HSHV.org/RescueReading.

White Tara Guided Healing Meditation – 10:30-11:30am. In-person & Zoom. Free. Jewel Heart Tibetan Buddhist Learning Center, 1129 Oak Valley Dr, Ann Arbor. 734-994-3387. JewelHeart.org.

Clearing Meditation with Billie Tobin – 11am. 4th Sun. Each person gets one question answered for healing an issue. In person. Troy. RSVP required: 248-789-1980.

Sunday Talk with Demo Rinpoche – 11am-12pm. In-person & Zoom. Jewel

Heart Tibetan Buddhist Learning Center, 1129 Oak Valley Dr, Ann Arbor. 734-994-3387. JewelHeart.org.

Pure Vin Experience Jazz Brunch – 12-3:30pm. 2nd & 4th Sun. Live music, all-you-can-eat brunch and fantastic wine. House Of Pure Vin, 1433 Woodward Ave, Detroit. 313-638-2501. HouseOfPureVin.com.

Y12SR Class – 1pm. 1st & 3rd Sun. Each meeting consists of a group sharing circle and an intentional yoga class taught by a certified Y12SR leader. Donation. Welcome Home Yoga, 6375 W Seven Mile Rd, Ste 103, Detroit. Registration required: 313-917-7579 or WelcomeHomeYoga.com.

Peace: Candlelight Yoga – 4pm. For all levels. This class is diffused with essential oils and soothing soaking into your mat music. Sacred Space Yoga & Reflexology Centre, 4801 Chrysler Dr, Detroit. 313-352-6788. SacredSpaceYogaDetroit.com.

Guided Group Breathwork – 6-7:30pm. 1st & 3rd Sun. A group session of gentle, connected breathing and breath holds with music, guided by Jackie Miller, certified breathwork facilitator. Free, donations welcome. Huron Valley Aikikai, 1904 Federal Blvd, Ann Arbor. Registration required: ThisBreath.com.

Guided Group Breathwork – 6-7:30pm. 4th Sun. See description above. Dzanc House, 402 S Huron St, Ypsilanti. Registration required: ThisBreath.com.

MONDAYS

Sunrise Flow – 7-7:45am. Gentle Vinyasa that intentionally opens and challenges the sometimes sleepy and stiff morning body. Citizen Yoga Studio, 1224 Library St, Detroit. 313-502-5450. CitizenYogaStudio.com.

Weekday Morning Online Meditation – Mon-Fri. 7:30-8am. Insight Meditation Ann Arbor offers a 30-min online group sitting via Zoom. Free; donations gratefully accepted. InsightMeditationAnnArbor.org.

Mindful Dexter – 12-12:30pm. Last Mon. A short 30-min guided meditation that is a simple and practical mindfulness tune-up that you can access from wherever you are. Zoom. Tinyurl.com/mindfuldexter.

Let's Meditate Detroit: Free Guided Meditation – 6:30-7:30pm. With Sahaja Yoga Meditation, we generally sit on chairs to achieve yoga, effortlessly and spontaneously. As such, no asanas (exercises) are required, no mat or special clothing. Campbell Library, 8733 Vernor Hwy, Detroit. 315-390-0278. DetroitPublicLibrary.org.

Meaningful Mondays – 8pm. SevaLight Retreat Centre warmly welcomes everyone, of all faiths, meditation practices and traditions, to join us virtually. Will gather on video conference sharing in song/chants and inspiring readings from Mata Yogananda Mahasaya Dharmaji's writings, followed by Pure Meditation and silent prayer. Free. Email by 10am any Mon to receive the info about how to join by video: Info@SelfRealizationCentreMichigan.org.

TUESDAYS

Senior Discount Tuesdays: Castle Remedies – Customers over the age of 65 can receive a 10% discount on their in-store purchases. In the Parkway Center, 2345 S Huron Pkwy, Ann Arbor. 734-973-8990. CastleRemedies.com.

Online Meditation from Anywhere – 9-9:30am. Building an international sangha by connecting loving hearts. Donations welcome. To receive a link: CelesteZygmont2@yahoo.com or DeepSpring.org.

Chair Yoga – 10am. With Holy Yoga Detroit. Free. Durfee Innovation Society, 2470 Collingwood, Ste 213, Detroit. 313-437-1549. DurfeeIS.org.

Therapeutic Yoga – 10am. All levels. Perfect for those with back problems, healing injuries, inflexibility, weak abs or back muscles, stress, fatigue, overweight, depression and arthritic conditions. Yoga 4 Peace, 13550 Dix Toledo Rd, Southgate. Y4Peace.org.

Family Yoga – 11am-12pm. With Holy Yoga Detroit. All ages welcome. Free. Durfee Innovation Society, 2470 Collingwood, Ste 213, Detroit. 313-437-1549. DurfeeIS.org.

Parent-to-Parent Support Group – 12-1:30pm. 3rd Tues. Also 6-7:30pm, 4th Thurs. For parents and caregivers of children, adolescents and young adults. An open, welcoming group providing dialogue and peer support. Free. The Children's Center, 90 Selden, Detroit. TheChildrensCenter.com.

Mini-Community Acupuncture Happy Hour – 3-5pm. Relax, zen out, and experience the relaxation and health benefits of acupuncture in a welcoming community setting. Bring a friend and enjoy a mini-session designed to help you unwind and explore the benefits of acupuncture. Solara Wellness, 644 Migaldi Ln, Ste 300, Lansing. 517-388-1507. SolaraWellness.net.

Neverending Lam of Liberation – 7-8:30pm. With Demo Rinpoche. In-person & Zoom. Jewel Heart Tibetan Buddhist Learning Center, 1129 Oak Valley Dr, Ann Arbor. 734-994-3387. JewelHeart.org.

Hatha-Flow Yoga for Wellness – 7:30-8:30pm. Beginner/Level 1; Intermediate/Level 2. Moderately challenging yoga practice. Suitable for those with a moderate fitness level, some yoga experience helpful but not necessary. In-person or online. $14/class. Crysterra Wellness, Dexter Early Education Complex, Beacon Gym, 7480 Dan Hoey, Dexter. 734-649-1849. Tinyurl.com/3fw4ezrm.

WEDNESDAYS

Cooking Matters – 10:30am-12pm. Help end childhood hunger by inspiring families to make healthy and affordable food choices. Program to teach parents and caregivers with limited food budgets to shop for and cook healthy meals. Free. Brilliant Detroit Cody Rouge, 7425 Fielding St, Detroit. RSVP: 313-406-3275.

CEW+Inspire Midweek Mindfulness Guided Sit – 12:15-12:45pm. This virtual community of practice is open to all, whether new to mindfulness or seeking to deepen an existing practice. Registration is simple; sign up once to receive ongoing access to weekly Zoom sessions. Cew.Umich.edu.

Allen Farmers Market – 3-6:30pm. Year-round. Stock up on groceries and visit the Eastside Lansing Food Co-Op onsite at the same time. 1629 E Kalamazoo St, Lansing. Facebook.com/AllenFarmersMarket.

Wonder Walks – 5:30pm. See Sun listing. Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N Dixboro Rd, Ann Arbor. mbgna.umich.edu.

ArtBlock Yoga – 6-7pm. Last Wed. Free yoga in the new art-infused space, ArtBlock. 1411 Holden St, Detroit. 313-871-4000 x 3. Tinyurl.com/y4xksa7g.

Mindfulness Meditation: Thich Nhat Hanh Tradition – 7-8pm. All welcome. Van Hanh Temple, 3015 S MLK Jr Blvd, Lansing. LansingCityPulse.com.

THURSDAYS

Class Observation – 11-11:30am. Also Fri. Ann Arbor School of Massage, Herbal and Natural Medicine, 3684 W Liberty Rd, Ann Arbor. RSVP: 734-769-7794. NaturopathicSchoolOfAnnArbor.net.

Beginner Tai Chi – 6-7:15pm. A series of postures linked together in fluid manner. Focuses on relaxation in motion, balance and the mind/body connection. Can attend one or both sessions per week (Mon morning &/or Thurs evening). $195. Peaceful Dragon School, 1945 Pauline Blvd, Ste B, Ann Arbor. 734-741-0695. PeacefulDragonSchool.com.

Gentle Restorative Yoga for Stress & Anxiety Relief – 7:30-8:30pm. Beginner/Level 1. Create harmony and balance of body and mind through physical postures, breathing techniques and an extended guided relaxation at the end of class. In-person & online. $14/class. Crysterra Wellness, Dexter Early Education Complex, Beacon Gym, 7480 Dan Hoey, Dexter. 734-649-1849. Tinyurl.com/4u9e7jsm.

FRIDAYS

Monthly Women's Circle – 6:30-8pm. 2nd Fri. A safe and supportive circle to come together to build skills, process emotions, connect with others and foster sisterhood. The circle offers guidance, laughter, sharing, growth and strength in community. $25. Alchemy Holistic Collective, 105 E Middle St, Chelsea. 734-210-1922. AlchemyHolisticCollective.com.

SATURDAYS

Eastern Market – 6am-4pm. Year-round. 2934 Russell St, Detroit. EasternMarket.org.

ACUPUNCTURE

ALICE HUANG'S NATURAL CHINESE THERAPIES

2939 1st St, Wyandotte 734-324-1168
1311 N. Main St, Clawson 248-278-6081
AliceHuangs.com

Alternative and holistic healing specializing in natural Chinese therapies: acupuncture, massage, cupping, DDS therapy, colon hydrotherapy, foot detox and more. Multiple locations to better serve you. Make an appointment today. *See ad, page 5.*

Acupuncture & Herbal Medicine

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Melissa Anderson L.Ac
517-618-1772
PrescriptionEarth.com

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acupuncture + herbal medicine

Melissa provides a wide selection of services including acupuncture, acutonics, gua sha and fire cupping. She has treated thousands of patients with medical conditions including (but not limited to) digestive disorders, pain, anxiety, depression, PTSD, women's health & fertility, and auto-immune diseases. *See ad, page 11.*

Alternative & Holistic Health Center

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Plymouth, MI
DrJulie@DrJulieTwoMoon.com
DrJulieTwoMoon.com

Go from surviving to thriving. I support people in reclaiming their vitality, embodying their divine brilliance, and finally healing what has long felt unhealable. Schedule your Free Clarity Call today. *See ad, page 16.*

Aromatherapy

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Margo Hertzfeld, Certified Aromatherapist
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RosyGlowWellness.com

Clinically certified aromatherapist offers holistic consultations with customized blends of professional quality essential oils. Trust Margo to help you understand the complicated world of aromatherapy. Her holistic approach can help you maximize your benefits from this powerful therapy and minimize side effects. Aromatherapy is a wonderful way to integrate natural healing into your life. Phone consultations are available.

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734-747-6400
DrDobracki@AnnArborsDentist.com
AnnArborsDentist.com

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Coaching@BeckyBortak.com
248-931-0944
BeckyBortak.com

I believe everyone can create a fulfilling and meaningful life, and I can help you achieve that. I offer one-on-one coaching. My areas of expertise include career coaching and confidence-building.

Education

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School of Pharmacy
CUW.edu/NPS

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY WISCONSIN

Take the next step toward a career that makes a difference! Discover Your Future in Natural Product Sciences with our flexible graduate programs. Choose from a 30-credit online Master's degree or a 12-credit graduate certificate, both designed to fit your life and goals. Specialize in medical cannabis or nutraceuticals, and prepare for exciting roles in healthcare, pharmacy, research and development, manufacturing, business and beyond. *See ad page 18.*

MARY LIGHT NATURAL MEDICINE

nshaassociates@gmail.com
734-769-7794

MARY LIGHT ND MH LMT
Consults, Sales Apothecary, Training

Natural Medicine Certification training! open for registration. A year long series to begin October. Advanced registration necessary. Welcoming calls and visits. *See ad page 13.*

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(A Private Membership Association)
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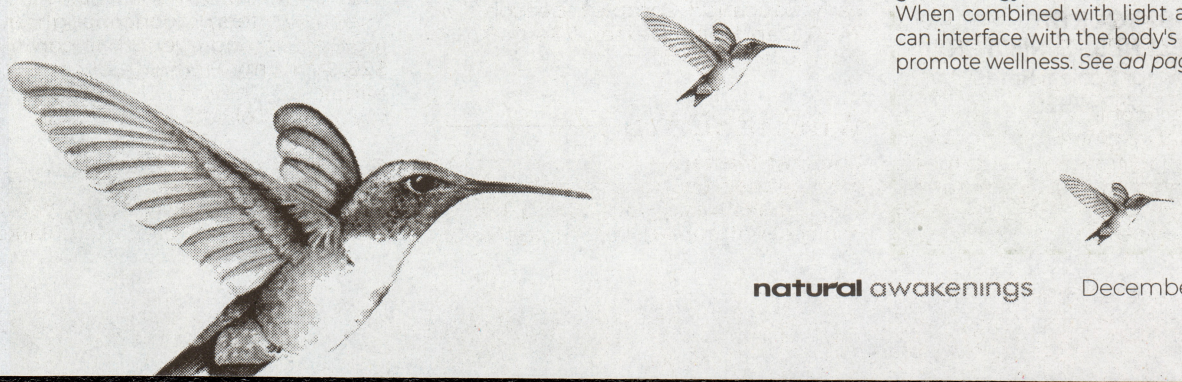
517-599-4949
MiraculousEnergies.com

Miraculous Energies
Energy Lounge

The EESystem combines Body, Mind, Spirit and Science. This system generates multiple bio-active life-enhancing energy fields, including scalar waves and a morphogenic energy field, also known as scalar vortex. When combined with light as biophotons, it can interface with the body's DNA matrix and promote wellness. *See ad page 7.*



Health Food Store

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44427 Ann Arbor Rd E, Plymouth
734-455-1440
20432 Farmington Rd, Livonia
248-471-9600
22250 Michigan Ave, Dearborn
313-724-6000
17825 Eureka Rd, Southgate
734-374-1973
19221 Mack Ave, Grosse Pointe Woods
313-885-5000
305 N Clippert St, Lansing
517-332-6892
6235 W Saginaw Hwy, Lansing
517-323-9186
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Michigan's #1 source for organic foods, vitamins and more. Better nutrition at better prices, all backed by better advice from our nutrition experts. You will find; organic produce, all the top-quality vitamins and supplement brands, sports nutrition and proteins, delicious prepared foods, desserts, an organic salads, soup and hot bar, natural bath, body and aromatherapy products, green home products. Get rewards through our APP. *See ad page 23.*

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DR. MALCOLM SICKELS, M.D.
210 Little Lake Dr, Ste 10, Ann Arbor
734-332-9936
DrSickels.com

Malcolm Sickels earned his M.D. from the University of Michigan, where he taught fellow medical students about different approaches to health. Board certified in Family Medicine and Holistic Medicine, he is in solo practice on the west side of Ann Arbor. Learn more at Dr. Sickels.com. *See ads pages 12 and 19.*

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In the Parkway Center
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CastleRemedies.com

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UNIVERSAL ENERGY WELLNESS SPA
Christine Bridges
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Christine@UniversalEnergyWellness.com
734-934-7271 By appointment only
UniversalEnergyWellness.com

With the ability to see inside the physical, energy, and past life bodies. Your mind, body, and soul will work together to heal and become more connected to your higher-self and God. Organ alignment through visceral manipulation to drain toxicities, intuitive massage therapy to release muscles and trauma holding them, organic facials to move lymph and look beautiful, plus calming reiki healing energy. The spa services we've designed are to give you a place to release trauma, destress, and add organic daily practices into your life. We work with both pediatric and adult clients depending on service. Group healing classes listed monthly; including singing bowl meditations, mini services, and guest practitioners to teach and provide new modalities. If you are struggling with physical or emotional health concerns and can't find answers, we can help guide you to shift your patterns. Call or text to book today. *See ad page 7.*

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WholeLifeVet@gmail.com
517-474-4050
WholeLifeVeterinary.com

Give your horse or pet the benefit of both worlds with a combination of Western medical knowledge and Traditional Chinese Veterinary Medicine and acupuncture in the comfort of your own home or barn. We are committed to providing you with the best holistic pet health. We provide holistic care, in-home euthanasia, and equine lameness care. *See ad page 27.*

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MOLDPRO
John Du Bois, CMI, CMR, CCMI
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734-439-8800 · MoldProllc.com

MoldPro offers chemical-free mold remediation, independent certified mold testing, inspection and consultation services all over SE Michigan specializing in mold biotoxin illness clients.

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DoctorRadows.com

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Nature-Oriented Meeting Space

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734-475-1892
MFCenter.org/rent

We offer the holistic community a nature-oriented meeting space for workshops, meetings, counseling, yoga, youth groups and family gatherings. Main room accommodates 100, with two smaller classrooms and kitchen facilities. Hiking trails. Weekend rates range from $200-$400, additional for extensive grounds use, camping. *See ad page 19.*

Neurofeedback

ALCHEMY HOLISTIC COLLECTIVE
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734-210-1922
AlchemyHolisticCollective.com

ALCHEMY HOLISTIC COLLECTIVE

ALCHEMY Holistic Collective is the area's only IASIS Micro Current Neurofeedback provider. Find lasting support for anxiety, depression, ADHD, insomnia, OCD, addiction, TBI, migraines, pain issues and more - for the entire family! *Natural Awakenings* readers can receive $150 off the purchase of a Neurofeedback package.

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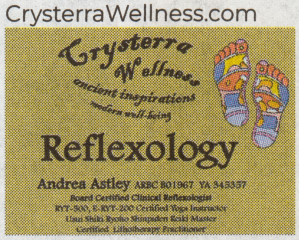
734-649-1849
CrysterraWellness.com



Suffering from the effects of Stress, Fatigue, Hormonal Issues, Burn-out, Inflammation, Chemotherapy, Insomnia, Depression, Chronic Pain and/or Digestive issues? REFLEXOLOGY CAN HELP! Reflexology can assist in addressing many physical and emotional health concerns. Experience the difference a highly skilled, Board Certified Clinical Reflexologist can make as part of your Wellness Team!

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734-883-8775

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Wellness Center

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Thrive-Wellness-Center.com

thrive! Wellness Center

At Thrive! Wellness Center Shannon Roznay, DC, specializes in Nutrition Response Testing and Activator Chiropractic. Thrive! also carries natural foods, skin and home products. *See ad page 20.*

WYCOFF WELLNESS
John O. Wycoff, DO
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517-333-7270
WycoffWellness.com

We provide customized preventative care and lifestyle improvement plans for all patients. We focus on exploring natural solutions to many health problems or concerns, but do not abandon conventional medicine. We provide a blend of traditional and alternative care to help you achieve health and wellness naturally. *See ad on back cover.*

Cover Artist

Merry and Bright

Skye Winter is an artist from the U.S. Virgin Islands, now living in Spartanburg, SC, with her husband. Inspired by the vibrant colors of her island home and her love of surrealism, Skye creates artwork that brings a sense of wonder and joy to her subjects. Her paintings and photography, known for their bold colors and whimsical style, have been showcased in galleries across Central Florida, South Carolina and Michigan.

Her featured piece, Merry and Bright, reflects the festive spirit of the holiday season, celebrating its warmth, cheer, and hope through vivid, colorful design.

To view more of Skye's work, visit SkyeWinter.com where you can purchase a variety of items including totes, jigsaw puzzles, pillows, notebooks, stationery and, of course, wall art! Get your holiday shopping done early. She can easily be reached at email: Skye@SkyeWinter.com.

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- Colon Hydrotherapy
- & More!

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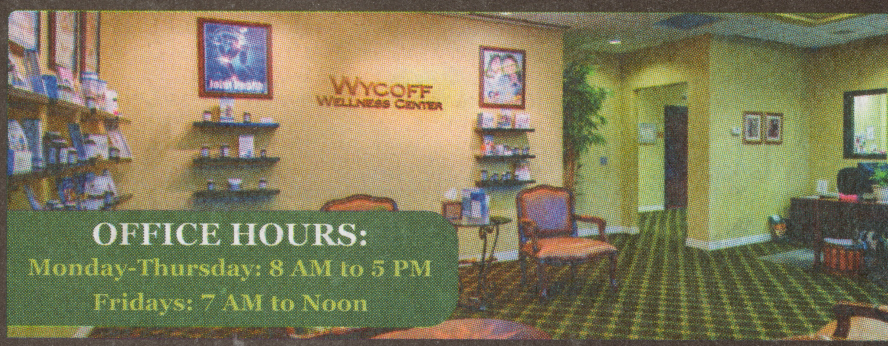
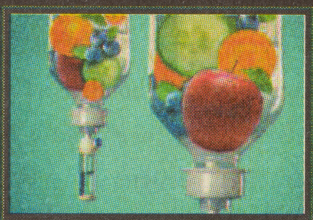
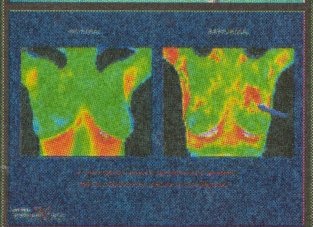


OFFICE HOURS:

Monday-Thursday: 8 AM to 5 PM

Fridays: 7 AM to Noon





Wycoff Wellness

Your Functional Medicine Expert in Mid-Michigan!

- Thermal Breast Imaging (thermography)
- High Dose Intravenous Vitamin C Infusions
- Ultraviolet Blood Irradiation with Ozone Infusions
- Galleri Early Cancer Detection Blood Testing
- Intravenous Nutrient Infusions
- Intravenous EDTA Chelation Infusions
- Detoxification • Colon Hydrotherapy
- Far Infrared Sauna • and More!

Dr. John Wycoff

"We are committed to finding the CAUSES of your symptoms; not just treating your symptoms."